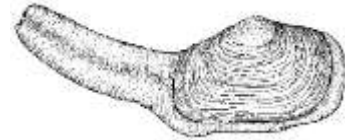

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2015/16 SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL GEODUCK CLAM FISHERY

Juneau . . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) announced today the following information concerning the 2015/16 commercial geoduck clam fishery in District 13:

The Sitka Area geoduck clam biomass was last assessed in 2006. In June 2015, the Sitka Area geoduck clam biomass was reassessed and a new biomass estimate was calculated using an area-based assessment method. The resulting guideline harvest levels (GHLs), by area, are as follows:

Biorka Channel and Legma Island Area (Subdistrict 113-31-003): will be open for a GHL of 5,500 pounds of whole geoduck clams (a decrease of 4,000 pounds) only in those waters east of a line from the northeastern most tip of Hanus Island to a point on the southeast shore of Biorka Island at 56°50.55' N. latitude, 135°30.97' W. longitude, to a point 0.5 nautical miles southeast of Jug Island at 56°47.10' N. latitude, 135°25.60' W. longitude and south and west of a line from the northeasternmost tip of Hanus Island to the westernmost tip of Middle Rock to a point approximately midway between Torsar Island and Blackbird Island at 56°50.48' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude, to a point approximately 0.5 nautical miles southeast of Jug Island located at 56°47.10' N. latitude, 135°25.60' W. longitude.

Taigud and Kolosh Islands Area (Subdistricts 113-31-004, 113-41-004): will be open for a GHL of 1,900 pounds of whole geoduck clams (an increase of 500 pounds) only in those waters along the western coast of Baranof Island and associated offshore islands south and east of a line from Cape Burunof to the northernmost tip of Little Biorka Island, and north and east of a line from a point at the southern entrance of Kliuchevoy Bay at 56°50.18' N. latitude, 135°22.67' W. longitude to a point southwest of Fragrant Island at 56°50.08' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude, to a point approximately midway between Torsar Island and Blackbird Island at 56°50.48' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude, to Middle Rock, to the northernmost tip of Hanus Island, and to the northernmost tip of Little Biorka Island.

Harvesters are reminded that waters described in 5 AAC 38.142 (l) (3) (A) and (B), located within the above described area are closed to the commercial harvest of geoduck clams.

Elovoy, Golf, and Gornoi Islands Area (Subdistrict 113-31-005): will be open for a GHL of 1,900 pounds of whole geoduck clams (a decrease of 100 pounds) in the waters enclosed by a line from the southern entrance of Kliuchevoy Bay at 56°50.18' N. latitude, 135°22.67' W. longitude, to a point located at 56°50.08' N. latitude, 135°25.77' W. longitude (southwest of Fragrant Island) to a point located at 56°47.10' N. latitude, 135°25.60' W. longitude (approximately 0.45 nautical miles southeast of Jug Island) to a point located at 56°41.97' N. latitude, 135°17.52' W. longitude (southern tip of Scow Island)

to a point located at 56°41.73' N. latitude, 135°15.50' W. longitude (southernmost tip of Beauchamp Island).

Closed waters: the waters of Middle Channel east of a line from 56°44.10' N. latitude, 135°14.77' W. longitude to 56°44.37' N. latitude, 135°15.02' W. longitude and West Crawfish Inlet east of a line from 56°46.28' N. latitude, 135°16.39' W. longitude to 56°46.69' N. latitude, 135°17.21' W. longitude, will be closed to the harvest of geoduck clams.

Area Closures:

Symonds Bay (Subdistrict 113-31-002): will not open this season. The GHL prior to reassessment was 4,500 pounds of whole geoduck clams. The 2015 stock assessment survey revealed that the estimated biomass of geoduck in this area has fallen to less than 30 percent of the original biomass estimate. Therefore, under 5 AAC 38.142 (h), this area will remain closed.

Observations of sea otters and evidence of sea otter predation on geoducks and other species were well documented during dive surveys in all four Sitka areas.

The Sitka area commercial geoduck clam fishery is expected to begin September 2016 after consultation with the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (SARDFA) Geoduck Committee. Open fishing periods and locations will then be announced by a subsequent ADF&G news release.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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